

MEDIA RELEASE

Junior game designers create a reaction at PAX

24 October 2017: Gaming industry experts have commended the winners of the 2017 Australian STEM Video Game Challenge, which this year required students as young as 10 years old to design and build a video game addressing the theme ‘reaction’.

Speaking ahead of the award ceremony for the winners at PAX in Melbourne on Saturday 28 October, Academy of Interactive Entertainment Chairman and CEO John De Margheriti said he hoped participants in this year’s Challenge would be among the next generation of game developers and 3D artists.

“The students behind the winning games in this year’s Australian STEM Video Game Challenge have demonstrated remarkable levels of creativity and technical skill that stand them in good stead for future careers in the interactive entertainment industry,” Mr De Margheriti said.

“All entrants should be proud that they have created an original video game using new and emerging technology. They’ve used skills and knowledge vital not only to games development but the future of our creative digital industries.”

The Australian STEM Video Game Challenge promotes engaging and interactive learning to increase interest and participation in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines by inviting school students in Years 5 to 12 to create an original video game. The Challenge is coordinated by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and supported by major partner, Academy of Interactive Entertainment, and innovation partners, HP Australia, BigAnt Studios, Google and PAX Australia, as well as government, universities, corporate partners and game developers.

ACER Foundation Director Lisa Norris said research shows that gaming and game design for learning are increasingly being embraced.

“The Interactive Games and Entertainment Association’s Digital Australia 2018 survey found that 50 per cent of parents reported that their children have used games as part of their school curriculum, compared to 35 per cent in the 2016 survey,” Ms Norris said.

“We have seen a great reaction to this year’s Australian STEM Video Game Challenge theme. The Challenge provides a great opportunity for upper primary and secondary students to engage in relevant, hands-on, inquiry-driven learning spanning the STEM disciplines in a fun, exciting and challenging way.”

Winners in the 2017 Australian STEM Video Game Challenge will be showcased at PAX, one of the largest video gaming conventions in the world, at the Melbourne Convention Centre from 27-29 October.

An award ceremony will take place at 11 am on Saturday 28 October at the Australian STEM Video Game Challenge stand in the PAX expo hall, where the winning games will also be playable throughout the convention. The ceremony will be followed by a panel discussion at 3.30 pm in the Fruitbat Theatre, where game industry professionals Neil Boyd, Chad Habel, Ross Symons and Greg Askew will unpack what goes into making a great game.

***** CONTINUES *****

Winners in the 2017 Australian STEM Video Game Challenge

Years 5-8 Scratch – Marcus Carr, Bert Lee, Jayden Shi and Eric Shin, Chatswood Public School, NSW, for *Asteroid Smash!*

Years 5-8 Gamemaker – Jaxson Brown, Australind Senior High School, WA, for *Cube Runner*

Years 5-8 Open – Michael Ostapenko, home school, QLD, for *Reaction*

Years 9-12 Gamemaker – Jett-Lee Wetherald, Mason Brennan and John Saxon, Maroochydore State High, QLD, for *Shards of Azothornia: The First Shard*

Years 9-12 Unity3D/Unreal Engine – Kye Ziebarth, Fabian Scheffler and Kenji McAuliffe, Churchlands Senior High School, WA for *Goldberg*

Years 9-12 Open – Jacob Thomas, Dylan Kalms-Taylor, Caleb Jeanes and Chloe Godfrey, Kalianna School Bendigo, VIC, for *Gizma's Adventure*

Read more about the winners and play the winning games at < www.stemgames.org.au/news-and-events >

Registrations for the 2018 Australian STEM Video Game Challenge open in April 2018. For more information, visit < www.stemgames.org.au >

*****ENDS*****

Media enquiries: Steve Holden, 03 9277 5582 or 0419 340 058 communications@acer.org